

increases. That is, taxes would go up if the CPI is adjusted downward, and that would of course be primarily on middle class taxpayers, with tax increases averaging over \$400 per year by the year 2008, and the remainder of the adjustments would fall on entitlement beneficiaries like Social Security recipients who would get lower annual cost-of-living adjustments. Congress should consider whether this mix of policy for deficit reduction achieves the desired results in the best way.

To date, the debate has been framed by the Boskin Commission report, but additional information and analysis is needed for balanced decisionmaking on this complicated issue. For this reason I have requested an indepth Bureau of Labor Statistics study of the technical issues raised by the Boskin Commission.

It is my hope that the BLS will complete its investigation and report this summer. In fairness to the many millions of Americans that could be affected by these policy changes, I would hope that Congress would receive and digest the forthcoming BLS study before hasty actions are taken. Though the BLS is certainly not above criticism and perhaps should have acted more strongly in this area heretofore, more than one perspective is needed, and the BLS can provide that perspective for sound policymaking with respect to the CPI.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have seen enough tax increases, and they are entitled to know that Social Security cost-of-living adjustments will be safe. They do not need these programs tampered with through the back-door adjustment of the CPI.

OUR CHILDREN MUST BE OUR PRIORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EHLERS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. McGOVERN] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this Thursday, House Democrats will introduce one of the major planks of the families first agenda: the Children's Health Care Act.

Mr. Speaker, one child in seven living in the United States is without health insurance. That is about 10 million uninsured kids. This statistic is not really startling, it is simply unacceptable. It is unacceptable for a nation as wealthy and as powerful as ours to be denying our kids the health coverage that they need and that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I did not have to look very far to see firsthand evidence of this national crisis. Just 2 years ago in my home State of Massachusetts, 23 percent of children under the age of 18, or some 160,000 kids, were without even basic health insurance. And it does not take a pediatrician to understand what this meant for Massachusetts. Unin-

sured children are at risk of contracting preventable illnesses, illnesses that cost far more to treat than they do to prevent. Millions of kids without insurance means millions of kids without a secure future and millions of dreams deferred.

Families with uninsured kids do not want their children to be vulnerable, but they live from month to month and paycheck to paycheck with little money in the family budget to spare. These families are hard-working families, forced by their economic position to choose between paying for things like food and rent, hot water and electricity, and paying for things like prescriptions or doctor visits for their kids.

So what happens when a child's health needs are deferred? Well, their families pay dearly. For example, one-third of uninsured children with recurring ear infections never see a doctor. Many suffer hearing loss that is permanent and, what is worse, was preventable.

But the health care crisis goes beyond health and money; it affects our children's very capacity to learn and to grow. When I was a little kid, I remember having trouble learning in school. I was getting terrible headaches all the time and I had a lot of trouble concentrating. I remember vividly the day that my parents took me to the doctor to get my eyesight checked. As it turned out, I was getting headaches because I could not see the blackboard, and there was a simple solution: I needed eyeglasses.

Now, I would be lying if I said I was really excited about the prospect of getting eyeglasses as a kid. But as I was able to read what the teacher wrote on the board and as my headaches began to disappear and as my concentration began to improve, I was so inspired that I told my parents I wanted to grow up to be an eye doctor. To be frank, my mother still thinks that I should have become an eye doctor rather than the career path that I chose. But I learned a valuable lesson from that firsthand experience, and that is keeping our kids healthy is the best way to secure their future.

Now, my own State of Massachusetts has seen some very positive changes concerning health care in the past few years. Massachusetts worked hard to craft a bill called An Act to Improve Health Care Access. Now the law of the Commonwealth, this landmark piece of legislation is on the verge of giving basic coverage to some 125,000 kids in Massachusetts. That is 80 percent of the uninsured children in the State of Massachusetts.

So how was something like this financed? Well, Massachusetts has found the funds to undertake this bold plan in two areas. First, administrators found savings by streamlining and fine-tuning the way these programs are managed. Second, Massachusetts implemented a 25-cent-per-pack cigarette tax, a move that made my home State

eligible for more Federal funding. Massachusetts is watching that revenue do what every State in the Nation should do, and that is cover children's health care.

Mr. Speaker, we must understand that it is in the best interests of our country to recognize and provide for children in need. As Members of Congress, we would not send troops into battle knowing that one-seventh of their equipment was faulty. As Government officials, we would not agree to build bridges if 1 in 7 fell to the ground. And as parents, we would never send our children to schools in which 1 student in 7 did not see a teacher.

Massachusetts should serve as an inspiration for the rest of our Nation. Mr. Speaker, it is a national scandal that 40 million Americans are without health insurance in this country, but it is absolutely unconscionable that nearly 10 million kids find themselves without proper health care. Every Member of this body earns an enormous salary and enjoys a first-rate health care plan. Why should our children deserve any less?

Now, I have no illusions about our present political environment. I understand that this Republican Congress is nowhere near heeding the call for universal health care coverage. But while we cannot cover everyone yet, we must do what we can today. So let us make sure that our kids are covered. As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to prepare our children to be leaders tomorrow by insuring that they receive a healthy start today. Our children deserve no less.

OUR CHILDREN NEED OUR HELP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am dismayed that in our great country, there are children who do not have health insurance. There are 10 million children. That is not right. That is not fair. That does not make sense.

Our country is too rich, too powerful, too strong to have children without health insurance. We cannot call ourselves truly great when we do not provide for our most vulnerable and most precious, our children.

This is a problem that we can fix and we must fix. As a nation we made a commitment to educate our children. We do this because it is good for them and it is good for all of us. Now we must make another commitment. It is time to keep all of our children healthy. Each and every child, rich and poor, black and white, in the big cities to the suburbs of rural America. Each and every child should be able to see a doctor, to get medicine when they are sick, to have medical care when they need help. A sick child cannot go to school, cannot learn. A sick child cannot build for the future. A healthy child can study, work, and dream.

Mr. Speaker, there is no one right way to solve this problem, but we must solve it. We must focus our collective energy, the House, the Senate, and the White House, to solve this problem for the sake of all of our children. Let us come together and make a real commitment to find a solution. Let us put aside partisan differences, and let us join together to help each and every one of our children.

None of our children, not one, should be left out or left behind. We can, we must work together to provide health care for all of our children. The future of our children and the future of our Nation depends upon it.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Ronald F. Christian, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we acknowledge that You have made us in Your own image, so we pray: Look with love and compassion on Your whole human family. Take away from any of us the arrogance we may have for our own importance and significance. Dissolve any hatred that infects our hearts and inflicts our spirits. Break down the walls that may separate us one from the other. And, through our struggle and confusion, use our work to bring about Your purpose, so that in Your good time and season our work and our efforts and our decisions may serve the common good of all Your people, and in quiet harmony may they promote Your will and goodness. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the provisions of 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), the Chair appoints the following Members of the House to the Joint Economic Committee: Messrs. STARK, HAMILTON, HINCHEY, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Small Business:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 10, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House, Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I request that I be granted a leave of absence from the House Committee on Small Business in order to accept an appointment to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

IKE SKELTON,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM ELIMINATION ACT

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, a lot of the backroom deals in this town involve taking money away from middle-class people who work for it and then giving it to special interests who lobby for it.

One of the most outrageous transfer programs around now is called the Market Access Program, or MAP. In this particular scheme the Government takes money away from taxpayers and gives it to corporate trade associations to advertise their products overseas. We are dipping into the pockets of average Americans in order to subsidize private, politically preferred business dealings. So when I say the program is outrageous, I mean just that. It should cause outrage. It is about as close to legalized theft as you can get.

If businesses want to advertise overseas, great. They should do it, but with their own money. They should not beg Congress to squeeze the taxpayers even more than they are already squeezed with the high taxes we have in this country.

That is why the gentleman from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] and I have introduced H.R. 972, the Market Access Program Elimination Act. If you want taxpayers to be able to keep more of their

own money rather than having it go to groups like the Dry Pea and Lentil Council, please join us in this effort. Let us get rid of the Market Access Program.

AMERICA SOLD LOCK, STOCK, AND PORK BARREL

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, news reports say that China tried to influence and buy last year's Federal elections, including the Presidency. All of America is in an uproar. Newspapers are in shock and people are calling the talk shows on the radio and saying they believe America is for sale. Can you blame them?

China gets most-favored-nation trade status but sells missiles to our enemies. Japan keeps raping our marketplace, approaching \$70 billion in surpluses, and they keep denying our products. Mexico gets billions of dollars from us and they ship narcotics to our streets. And now American companies overseas are advertising in the newspaper for American workers to move overseas and get a good, livable wage job.

Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. America is not for sale. I think America has already been sold, and I think Congress should start looking into it. Sold, lock, stock, and pork barrel.

PROTECT AMERICA'S BORDERS

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I like those last remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I am outraged, also, at the President's lack of leadership in protecting our borders from the invasion of Mexican drug lords.

An article in the Dallas Morning News yesterday illustrated the national disaster we now have on the Texas border. Our ranchers, their families, live in constant fear. Their cattle and dogs are being killed by the drug guys. Their houses are being robbed. Recently a Border Patrol guard was gunned down by drug smugglers. These Americans live in a virtual war zone with no relief in sight.

Eight months ago our drug czar stood in Texas and announced swift action must be taken. Congress responded by authorizing 1,000 new drug agents in each of the next 5 years. Guess what? Our President only actually implemented 500.

It is time for this President to stop paying lip service to a problem that demands attention now. No one in America should be held hostage in their own house. We protect the borders around the world. It is time we started protecting our own.

HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1